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Kevin Dech 1986

i magazine



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i Magazine

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i MAGAZINE is a literary magazine published by the Division of Humanities and students at Mount Wachusett Community College, Gardner, Massachusetts.

People

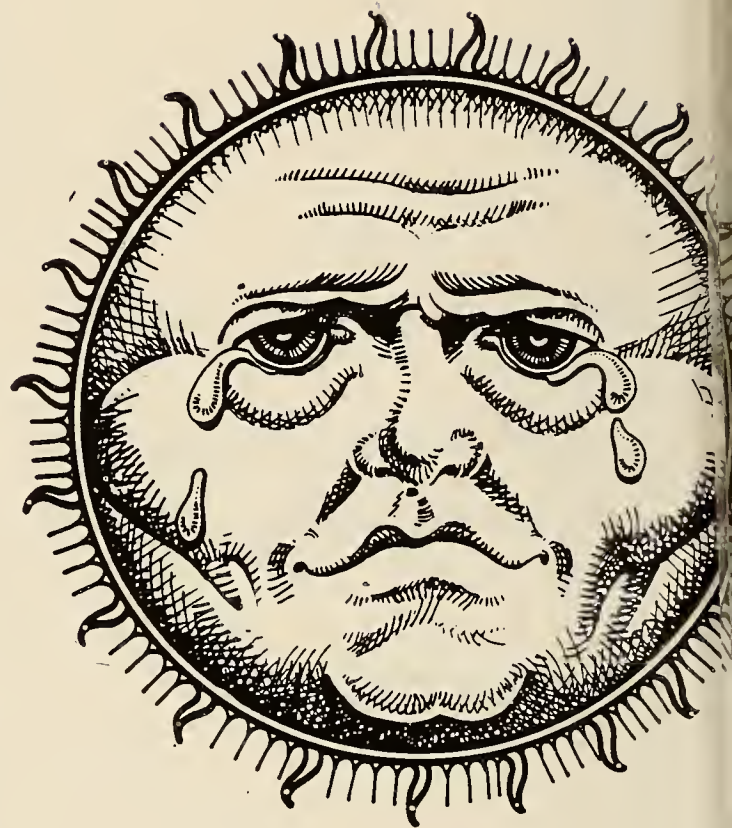
5 Billion people...
Just think what they could accomplish:

One person
could help the next,
Two people
could uplift a third,
Three
could support one more,
And four,
Four could lead others
to conquer anything and everything.

And yet...

One man casts aside
the next,
Two suppress
the third,
Three trample down
another,
And four,
Four multiply in words and deed faster
than any goodness could
until
Nations are filled with enough hatred
to fuel the fire for centuries on end.
So many people...such little courage.

DAWN WOFFENDEN



Some Time to Know You

A cup
of coffee,
a call
a smile

That's all

- no banquets
- no bouquets
Just some
Time

To know...you

Sandra Weller

Home at Last

In a drawer among the scarves and gloves
a tattered letter lies

All bent and worn from endless hours of
leafing o'er each page.

Buried 'neath the tear-stained lines a
faded photo hides

With face so proud and eager and of such a
tender age.

"Dear hon'," he said, "I'm tired and low and
long so much for home.

The scorching sun and jungle heat are more
than I can stand.

Around me and on every side those yellow
bastards roam,

Grenades or guns or blades concealed in
every yellow hand.

Just six more weeks and I can leave this
lousy war behind,

The stench of blood and sweat and guts, and
bodies soaked with red.

Can't wait to taste your apple pie, to
drink some cherry wine,

To smell your perfume, kiss your lips, to
sleep in my own bed."

He left a man so young, ablaze with
valor in his heart,

Affire with eager dreams and filled with
patriotic pride.

He'd give the world his muscle, give his
spirit, "do his part,"

He'd give all and more for those who
had already died.

How could he know the toll of endless months
in jungles deep?

Of constant vigilance, aware of "Charlies"
deadly gaze;

Of being stalked and hunted and of nights
afraid to sleep;

Of watching buddies blown away and left
to yesterdays.

He never dreamed of Napalmed streets and
fiery orange nights;

Of muscles torn and weary from some battle
just been fought;

Of missing limbs and shattered lives and
blazing rocket lights;

He never dreamed he'd "cell-mate" long-side
corpses left to rot.

"So sorry to inform you, ma'am," the final
letter read,

And she slipped it 'neath the pillow where
she gently laid her head.
The crimson roses whither, tossed haphazard
on his bed.
He came home proud,
He can home free,
Alas
HE came home dead.

GERRY DECH



On Being a Parent

As a father did I spoil my children with over-indulgence
In the fundamentals of spiritual living,
Encouraging them to be distinct personalities but stand
together collectively as a family;
By letting them know that I was not away but near them at
all times;
Teaching them to respect their elders as well as what's
personal and private;
Inspiring them to pursue education and knowledge to the
limit;
Supporting them to enjoy participation in individual and
team sports;
To walk, picnic and fish in woods and streams of several
states;
Observe and admire the Cape (Cod) and its companion ocean;
Insuring that they were not wanting in matters of love,
comfort or
material?
Very unlikely is it that I spoiled them in these affairs.
However, in this manner I did spoil them:
I did give them the greatest gift of all.
I gave them their witty, high spirited, yet gentle,
Irish mother!

JOSEPH A. KLEJNA

You Blew Your Candle Out

Once, it seems I'd weather the day
just to be with you.
You were my home in the winter,
And you'd close your doors
to where the cold winds blew.

We both lit a candle
and tended each one.
And, just when the two were about
to melt into one,
you blew your candle out.

Are you a beau to Loneliness?
You seem to court with her.
Does her presence comfort you more than my hand on your
shoulders?
Does her silence bring you joy more than the sound of your
child's laughter?
She was your childhood sweetheart,
and you went running back to her.

Am I just a chapter of your affairs?
...Or a book you placed up--
upon a shelf
with tears?
Did time crumble the pages to dust
like the trust
I had in you?

Does Love commend your indifference?
Does Life command I...
I pay the price?
You shut me outside in the winter
where the cold winds blew.
Did you believe in me like I believed in you?

There are two candles burning,
and you don't give a damn
what it's all about,
because in one split moment...
in one shallow breath...
you blew your candle out.

Peggy Marcoux

Cracker Jacks

Glen's hands trembled with excitement as he emptied the contents of the Cracker Jacks box into a small bowl on the counter. Standing in his kitchen, he took a few deep breaths to calm himself. Digging through the caramel-coated popcorn, he found the small packet containing the prize. Smiling to himself, he opened it. A ring. He mused at the irony as he removed from his shirt pocket another small envelope.

This is it, he thought. The big night. Five entire paychecks had been spent on the real ring in his hand, and within half an hour he would know. He would know the answer. The girl of his dreams was sitting in the next room, and for Glen, her decision within the next few moments could be a life changer.

Glen shook his head to clear his thoughts and to concentrate on the task at hand. He dropped the envelope containing the diamond into the empty Cracker Jack box. He scooped up some popcorn and began to fill the box in again.

For the millionth time he questioned his method. Diane would find the humor, wouldn't she? She wouldn't think it tasteless? No, dammit! Diane was a fun-loving girl. After ten months of going steady, Glen felt that she was right. The time was now. Everything was perfect.

Besides, he thought, Cracker Jacks are her favorite.

He poured the rest of the popcorn into the box. With a piece of tape he sealed it closed. Glen held the box up.

Perfect, he thought.

"What's taking so long in there?" Diane called from the living room. "The movie has already started."

Glen swallowed. "Just a minute, dear."

Oh, God...Oh, God...Oh, God...This is it, he thought. This is really it. I'm really going to do it.

With a shaky hand and a trembling heart, Glen casually strode into the living room.

Diane looked up.

"Oh, good," she said, "Cracker Jacks. My favorite."

Glen sat down next to her on the couch. Once again he was struck by her timeless beauty, her loving features and her child-like innocence.

"What are we watching?" he said as he slid his arm around her shoulders.

"Casablanca."

My God, Glen thought, that's gotta be fate. He couldn't have picked a better movie had he tried.

With his peripheral vision Glen watched as she absently opened the box, her attention focused upon the movie. She dug in for her first handful and Glen's heart stopped. He realized that her fingers had been just inches away from destiny.

Again, Glen considered the implications about the scene that was moments away. There would be a shock of surprise, a moment of understanding, and then...what? Tears, Glen thought. Yes tears. But whose?

She reached into the box and Glen's hands were sweating. Could this be it? She munched silently. Glen breathed once again.

"Want some?" she asked, holding the Cracker Jacks out to him.

"Uh...no, no thanks." He pretended to be engrossed in the film. His heart was skipping beats left and right. Diane continued to absently munch. Glen figured that there were no more than two handfuls left in the box. Glen realized that this was his last chance. If he wanted to, he could grab the box out of her hands and run away forever. He could forget everything.

He glanced at Diane. Did he really want to spend every breathing moment of his earthly existence with this woman? Day after day? Week after week?

Yes, he decided. He had made his bed, and now he was going to lie in it. He was going to face the music.

As Diane's next handful came up "sans" a prize, Glen realized that his future was in the next. He could barely stand the suspense. He felt sure he would pass out.

Oh, God, he thought. Please, God.

Next to him, Diane emptied the rest of the contents into her hand.

Glen closed his eyes.

"Oh, wow." she said.

Glen held his breath. "What?" he said.

"No prize."

"What?" Glen's eyes opened.

Diane turned the box upside-down to show him. "See?"

He grabbed the box from her hands and stared into it.

"What do you mean, no prize? There's always a prize!"

He reached for her hand and forced it open. Two peanuts and some caramel-coated popcorn. He grabbed her violently and shouted into her face.

"What did you do with the goddamn prize!?" His face was filled with panic and confusion.

"Take it easy, Glen. It was probably just a stupid ring."

He threw her off the couch and began to frantically search through the cushions. "Help me find that prize!"

"Jesus, Glen--"

He screamed. "Shut up! Now think! Are you absolutely positive that there was absolutely no prize?"

"Of course I'm positive. Glen. Are you O.K.?"

He ran into the kitchen and began to tear apart everything in sight. No prize. He was about to commence weeping when Diane walked into the kitchen.

"Glenn?"

He looked at her. "What," he said.

She held out her hand. On her finger was the ring. She smiled. "I knew it was there all along." Glenn stared at her. He shook his head in disbelief. "And....and you say yes?" he asked. "I'm wearing the prize, aren't I?" Glenn collapsed with relief into one of the kitchen chairs. "Whore-master," he said, under his breath.

Stephen R. Landry

Just Burn the Whole World

Crushed Cracker-Jack boxes,
Torn concert tickets,
Yellowed love letters,
Crunchie roses

Hey! Hey you. Uh. . . Do you have any gasoline?

The yearbook tainted with
your squiggly signature,
The worn out cassette that
you gave me for my birthday

Excuse me sir . . . Do you have a match?

That framed photograph
sitting upon my dresser
of two lovers embracing
each other, bearing smiles...

Just put it right here. We're gonna have a real good bonfire.

Cushing Academy,
Churches,
Yellow Oldsmobiles,
White houses (especially those with shutters)
Burn them.

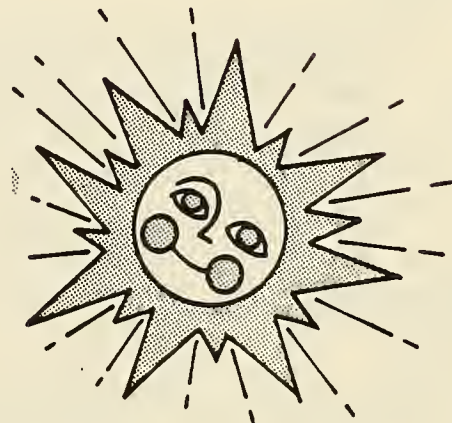
Na . . . Never mind . . . Just burn the whole world.

LIANA DELORGE

Log Cabin

There is an old house that sits by the sea.
It's really a pond, yet an ocean to me.
There grew through my window a mountain from sand.
It knows all about my insides, understand.
Surrounded by water a cat in a tree,
Who's really a lion who stays though he's free.
I looked for a woman to stay was my plan.
She came with conditions to make me a man.
She covered my window my cat and my joy.
I lost touch with the mountain that made me a boy.
So I found a new path yes known only by me
and I go there at night and I stare at the sea.
Yet by day with my girl cuz ya know well I miss her
But one of these days Alice, Boom! Right in the kissa!

DAVE



The Face in the Oval Frame

God entertains him somehow. I no longer can; he lives
in a hospital now. Still, he's forever smiling and laughing
when I visit.

He cannot move or speak. He's not chasing birds,
bending over to smell the flowers, or running for the
schoolbus. He's not catching raindrops on the tip of his
tongue.

But yet; he always smiles in the oval frame.

God entertains him somewhere.

WENDY WELDON

Adam After Death

Paradise
is exactly like
where you are
right now.
Only
much
much
better.

-Laurie Anderson "Language is a Virus"

Adam felt good. He was finally doing it. And as he was thrusting himself in deeper he felt wave upon wave of pleasure sweep over his mind. He touched her tongue with his and then exhaled into her face. He felt like he was going to explode.

Then, to his surprise, he did.

A sudden burst of light bathed Adam, the room, the girl, the bed, and turned everything to a shocking, pure white. Then, just as suddenly, Adam found himself face down on some hard surface.

"I was having sex," Adam thought to himself, "I didn't expect that this would happen." To add more to Adam's confusion, he found he was unable to remember the name of the girl he was with, or what the date was. All he knew was that his name was Adam and that he had been in the process of losing his virginity prior to his mind finding itself inside its body on a hard surface. That was all that he was.

He opened his eyes to find himself staring into a pair of eyes, that looked two-dimensional. Adam found that his arms still worked, and pushed himself up. He came face to face with himself. He was reflected in the floor of the room he was in. He was reflected in the walls, in the ceiling, reflected everywhere in a tiny cell. At least Adam thought it was tiny. He really couldn't tell since all there was in the room was himself and his infinite reflections to use for scale. Adam was face to face with himself.

Thoughts raced throughout the different sides of Adam's brain: "What am I doing here? How did I get here? Am I dead?". Adam didn't know the answers to the questions, so he set about inspecting his chamber. The walls were mirrors, and perfectly smooth. His hands couldn't leave fingerprints on them. The ceiling rose about half a foot, or what passed for half a foot in Adam's mind, above his head. The room was just big enough to stretch out in. The walls, floor and ceiling joined together but were connected at no discernible edge. They simply were there, as if they had been there always and always would be there. There was no door, no window, no exit from Adam's world.

He noticed his reflection again. He was dressed. He was wearing an ordinary pair of blue jeans and the sweat shirt of his that said "U of M" on it. It was the shirt he had worn everywhere at school, at least everywhere he could remember. It was the shirt he had gone to parties in, to classes in, to dinner on pizza in, to play basketball in, in short, the shirt he had lived in. And was out in that night. "It still is that night" Adam thought. "How do I know that? I don't know how long I've been here. He looked at his wrist and saw his wrist where he thought his watch would be. Adam felt cold.

Adam sat down again, disgusted. He wallowed in self-pity for a moment. He ran his hands over his body, trying to feel if he was real. His left hand found an envelope in his back left pocket. He pulled it out and looked at it. On the front, neatly printed, was his name. It wasn't his. He had never seen it before. He inspected it, felt it's edges, bent it, and held it up to his eyes. Adam decided to break the seal and open it. Inside was one page. He put the envelope down and clumsily opened the letter. There was no letterhead, no date. It said:

"You, _____, have ceased to be alive.
The circumstances of your death are unimportant.
You must now put all your earthly concerns aside and prepare for the next phase of your being. If you are ready to begin, say "I wish to begin" aloud. If you require more information, you may pick up the white courtesy phone to your left."

In the blank space Adam's name was flawlessly typed. He turned the letter over and looked at a blank side. He read the letter again.

"So I am dead. Doesn't feel any different." He said this out loud, as there was no one to hear except himself. He put the letter down and then saw that there was a white phone to his left. "Strange that I didn't see that before." he said to himself. It was an ordinary white phone, the kind he had seen hundreds of in offices everywhere during his lifetime. It was different though, in that there was only one button on it. That button was white. Adam moved himself over to it and picked it up in one hand. The phone didn't have any wires. The receiver was connected to the body of the phone, but the phone wasn't connected to anything. He turned it over. There were no marks on the bottom, no serial numbers, nothing. Adam put the phone back down on the floor.

Adam sat lost in thought. "So this is death." He thought again, "I might as well get on with it." He picked up the receiver on the phone. He placed it against his ear and heard a dial tone. He pushed the white button once. Adam heard a phone ring somewhere once, twice, three times. It connected. Adam heard three modulated tones go beep-beep-beeeeep and the voice of the phone company saying

"We're sorry, all circuits are busy now. Please try your call again later." Adam put the phone down and laughed for a moment. He picked up the phone again and pushed the button. The phone rang on the other end once, twice, three times, and then it was picked up. The voice of the phone company said into Adam's ear:

"Thank-you for using the white courtesy phone. In order for you to prepare yourself for what comes next you must purge yourself. To do this, you will relive your life from other people's points of view. When you are ready to begin, say "I wish to begin" out loud. This has been a recording."

Adam put the phone down. It evaporated. Quickly. Adam pondered for a moment. He'd never liked thinking while he was alive, but it seemed he'd have to make up for it here. "Relive my life from other people's points of view.? What's that mean?" He soon realized there was one way to find out, and said, out loud, "I'm ready to begin."

The scene of his reflections in front of him disappeared instantly, and he found himself looking up at bright lights. It didn't feel like his body, however. The arms and legs felt too heavy and the chest he had feeling in was heaving and breathing deeply. Suddenly, he felt the most exquisite pain rack his body from the region where Adam's balls had been in life. The pain passed. Adam heard a female voice say: "Why did I ever decide on natural childbirth!?" He didn't hear the voice speak out loud--it was the sound of someone speaking to himself inside his mind. He heard other voices, but they were a little muffled and Adam was still bewildered but he perceived that he, or whoever he was, was lying on his back with his legs spread apart. One of the voices said "O.K., push NOW" and a wave of pain and muscle contracting swept over Adam. He heard a voice say, "It's a boy..." The scene faded. Adam found himself staring at himself in one of the reflections in the cell he had found himself in. The voice of the phone company came out of nowhere and said "When you wish to continue, say so."

Adam called out "Can you help me!" while his body still twinged from the pain. There came no answer. Adam tried to compose himself as he felt a numbness slip over his entire body. Adam screamed out "Even if you can't hear me it won't work!". There was no answer to his screams, except the quiet echo of his own voice. Adam started to cry, to wail like a newborn child....

After a time, Adam realized that whatever his fate was, he would have to accept it in order to get it over with. He came to the conclusion that he was trapped in his cell and would have to follow what had been programmed for him. And so he said, out loud to no one but himself, "I am ready to continue."

Again the scene changed instantly before his eyes. He found himself filled with sensation and feeling he hadn't had before. He felt thin. And he was staring. He saw the reflection of a pair of eyes. The eyes weren't looking at their reflection. Adam saw through those eyes that he was looking at a room full of babies. He looked at his face and he realized he was taking his second look at his life through some guy's mind. His first thought on seeing his face was "Ugly." He felt the guy he was inside of take something from his mouth. Adam saw that it was a big, ugly cigar like the ones his father had smoked. Adam heard thoughts inside his head that said: "That must be him. There's my boy!" Adam saw that he was looking at an amorphous little child in a crib on the end of the first row. Adam heard more inside his head, "He's got his mother's eyes but my face. He's gonna be a looker like his dad." Just then the body Adam was in turned to his left to see a nurse entering the nursery with a bundle in her arms that Adam assumed was a newborn. The nurse pointed at the body Adam was in, then pointed at the baby. She put him down in an empty crib and covered him with a blanket, then went about her business. The body holding Adam's mind moved over to peer at the small package that had been deposited. The voice said "Ugh"... The picture in Adam's mind went snowy, then blank. Adam was back in his cell again.

Adam was still standing, staring at himself. His mind was going slowly. It started by saying "My own father didn't know me?" Adam wanted more to work with, so again he uttered the mantra of "I wish to continue."

The days or hours or weeks or years went by, and moment by moment Adam began to see himself as others had seen him. He saw himself leaving home for first grade, and felt his mother's reaction to his pet frog. He was his father washing his sports car that he called "she." Adam saw the people around him seeing him. He was the enter of his postlife universe.

Adam realized by the time he was seeing himself at age seven that he had memories of the events he was passing through. He began to go slower, to think about how he perceived what had happened and what had gone on in other people's heads. He also began to be able to tell who's body he was in after two or three experiences with them. He was always able to tell when he was in someone new. He saw what a kind thing it was to bring flowers to his grandmother in June when he was eight, even if he did steal them from the neighbor's yard. He really felt the hurt of the pain he inflicted on his friends and siblings like beaming his sister with a baseball when he was ten. It became easier to handle his pain...

Adam found himself at age 18, at a Prom in high school. He was with his date, a girl he knew more as a friend than as a girl. Her name was Faith. They were dancing, or rather, he was dancing with himself in her body. She was not paying attention to him. He remembered being mad at her. She kissed him, because she thought that was what he wanted, or so Adam discovered. Adam heard her sing inside her head to the music of the band; which sounded more amplified the second time around while they moved in time to the music. She sang:

I have climbed highest mountain
I have run through the fields
Only to be with you
Only to be with you
I have run
I have crawled
I have scaled
these city walls
These city walls
Only to be with you
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for

I have kissed honey lips
Felt the healing fingertips
and Burned like fire
This burning desire
I have spoke with eternal angels
I have held hand on the devil
One of the nights I was cold as a stone
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for

I believe in kingdom come
Where all the colors
bleed into one
bleed into one
Yes I'm still running
You broke the thorns and loosed the chains
carried the cross
of my shame
of my shame
You know I believe it
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for

The band wasn't as good as U2 and Bono, but hearing it inside Faith's mind made it seem better than it was. Adam found himself inside his cell while the song was chorusing for the end. He had returned to it so smoothly that he didn't notice. He was still dancing with Faith's memory in

his arms when he realized where he was and what he was doing. Adam thought to himself about how he thought he had lost her in life when she went off to the West to go to school. He realized that he had never had her. In a way he was glad, because he saw how much she did like him as a friend, from borrowing homework to rides to school, that he was glad he didn't spoil it. At this time Adam had grown to despise himself for most of what he had done in life. He should have been out in the world, drinking it in--living--rather than vegetating as he had been most of the time. Watching television. Eating junk food. Those moments now meant nothing to him...

* * *

Adam grew to love the life he had had, even if he had been a jerk some (or most) of the time. His memories told him that the end of his rerun was coming. That last week hit him hard, as Adam spent what seemed like hours ruminating over the information he picked up from inside the heads of the people around him. He had stopped trying to figure out what sort of concept of time he should operate, but he realized that it took him a long time to get to that last night.

And so the night went by as Adam was dreading what was going to happen. The body of the woman he had been with felt no different from the hundreds of different women he had been inside. He had been a mental parasite in the minds of thousands, but he could feel nothing from the her mind. It was as if he was just some toy or entertainment she had found for that last week.

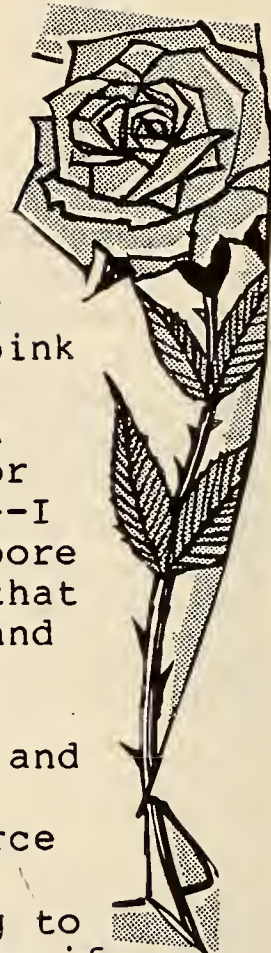
When his body began to twin with hers and start the process of Adam's death, Adam began to yell inside his mind--"Why am I doing this? Why am I here? How did I get here?" Adam felt himself flood with the pleasure in her mind. He felt his tongue touch hers. Adam's mind was on fire-his thoughts screamed "I'm fucking myself!."

At that moment, Adam found himself back in his cell. He starred into his reflection, face to face with himself. He was fading away. That was all that he was. And the voice of the phone company said to no one but itself-"Time for another one."

BOB BERNIER

Lyrics used in the above story are taken from Laurie Anderson's Home of the Brave and U2's The Joshua Tree.

The Fierce Rose



One night, while all alone in a house which usually sleeps five, I sat propped up upon my twin bed with the pink bed covers tucked around my waist. Tired of cops and robbers and bored of cliched romance movies so I flipped through the curled pages of my worn out Bible looking for some worthwhile and comforting passage to read. Oh no!--I accidentally encountered the rose. The withering rose bore a bold, snide and crisp appearance, like a dead corpse that had been rotting away for years. I picked up the rose and placed it near my nose, but unfortunately, it no longer possessed that genial, sweet-smelling odor known to its kind. No, it smelled more like the air around me--dead and stale.

Then I remembered the few short days when this fierce symbol was alive--how it alone stood in the white vase, strong yet tender, alive yet dying. The corpse, wanting to hurt me, began to remind me of its consumer. It asked me if I knew where the consumer was, and how he was doing. But I knew neither. I too, began to wonder about the consumer. Does he ever think of me? No, he doesn't. He doesn't have a fierce rose. I, getting tired of this torture, gently laid the rose back down onto the pages of Job, and quickly slammed the covers of the coffin shut, burying my tormentor.

Liana DeLorge

Who

Who's the stranger in your eyes,
The one who wears your face, in disguise,
The one I often see upon my pillow in the night,
The one who's in my dream, yet out of sight?
Who's the stranger,
in the court room?
Who's the stranger
in my yard?
It's the stranger that I married,
The one who used to care,
Who stripped me of my hopes and dreams,
And left my feelings bare.

CINDY BROWN

The Man Who Walks in Circles

Very early it became evident to me that Alpert and I shared a common interest, but had no common bond. Nevertheless, three or four times a week we could be found meandering along some cart roads in the backwoods. I was generally trying to enjoy the tranquil setting nature was offering. Alpert was someplace else.

Alpert had an obsession. No, he had two thoughts that almost completely dominated his mind. One was women, the other a crusade against a large corporation. This crusade is where our common interest lay. How Alpert and I got walking together I'll never know, but I found myself in a situation that had become uncomfortable. I suppose I need to take some of the blame. It was I who took him from the foul smelling sidewalks of the city and showed him these beautiful country lanes.

Alpert had been walking in what amounted to a large circle in the city. I have no such pattern; no predictable route. He needed noise. I cherished quiet. This is where the troubles began. He turned out to be selfish. He brought his circle into my territory. All the thoughts he had stored up when he walked alone, he dumped on me. Now remember he only had two compulsions.

Gone was the solitude. Alpert was like a tape cassette gone berserk. He repeated the same story time after time. He was clearly an unhappy person.

Shortly after we started walking, I gave him a book to read, by Henry Thoreau and his life in the woods. I thought this might help him take a closer look at himself. He said he liked the book especially some of Thoreau's ideas. That idea turned futile. Alpert couldn't change direction. The book didn't help him see the woods we were in. Even when we stopped to rest he didn't hear the sounds.

"Shushsh!" I said one day. It had started out as a gentle hum. In seconds the entire swamp we were sitting next to erupted into a symphony of noise. The surface of the water was boiling. What was it? I had never seen or heard anything like that in my life.

"What's dat?" Alpert asked.

"Shushshshh."

"Oh well, what say we get going," he added.

"Get going," I thought. "Get going where? This is where it's all at. We could be at the threshold of an important discovery, and this joker wants to continue in his circle. "Alpert, I think I'll stick around here for awhile."

"Huh, OK" he grunted, "Guess I'll go back to town. See ya."

When he left there was relief. It felt like a yoke had been taken off me. Except for the pandemonium on the pond my world again became calm. I was determined this is how it would remain.

I found out later the swamp was experiencing an event that occurs once a year; the birth of the spring peeper. A little frog, a million little frogs. Alpert missed it. He's missing a lot of things. This man will never catch up with what he's chasing because he's the man who walks in circles.

DONALD MCKAY



A Sonnet of Irony

I take a pen into my hand and my heart runs free.
My soul explores with love, caring and words abound.
An innocent idea, a poem, tugs at me,
Yet, I have no meter, no rhyme or repetitious sound.

I have only my emotions,
Does a poet have to be so structured, so engulfed in poetic
diction?

Must one lose his vision for a quaint ABAB rhyme?

Must a poem be so evenly sliced into neat little sections?

No, I will not succumb to structures, meter, rhyme schemes.
No, I will not succumb to couplets or fixed poetic forms.
No, I will not succumb to precision or preciseness for my
poetic dreams.
No, I will not succumb to poet- society's norms.

You learned men, keep using your structures, rhymes and
meters so cleverly, leave me with my pen in hand, my heart
and virginity.

SANDRA WELLER



Why Not

Hiroshima is worlds away. Who knows these people with slanted eyes and yellow skin? Who hears their mothers weep....who sees the terror in their babies eyes?

Why not drop a bomb?

High in misty mountains and deep in steaming jungles and muddy rice paddies, Southeast Asian Charlies thrust their bayonets into G.I. bellies; milky -skinned soldiers blast man-made fire through peasant villages. Whose blood is warm and moist upon their flesh? Whose corpses litter dusty paths?

Why not drop a bomb?

Painted deserts, verdant plains and rainbow canyons belie the precious freedom of once proud clay skinned native brothers whose open spaces now imprison them. Who sees the imprint in the parched encrusted earth? Who feels the churning hunger in their guts? Who smells the cheap, stale rum which oozes from their pores and deadens their pain?

Why not drop a bomb?

Damp and restless on cloud soft pillows and candy-striped sheets; thrashing through hazy dreams and troubled sleep---my soul aches for ebony countrymen doing battle with white robed demons and those who are robeless also; for majestic whales that no longer claim the seas as theirs; for poignant moans of velvet seals whose cottoned infants fall beneath the clubs; for nuclear dust and acid showers that whither our babies and birds and flowers; for suffering unsung heroes who can't escape their choiceless "duty calls me" wars---

Who sees? Who hears? Who knows? Who feels?

Who cares?

Why not drop a bomb?

GERRY DECH

Just Like Him

They're gonna put him down there. ...And I get to watch. Yay.

Of course, you got the obligatory asshole front and center...talkin' a bunch of flowery shit about him. Shit, he wouldn't understand if he was right here next to me. About him. Guy didn't even know him...Asshole.

And of course, the two sobbing old ladies attempting to console the poor sobbing mother. Stupid bitches probably saw him twice in his whole fuckin' life...once to say he's got his mother's eyes, which he don't, and once to tell him they remember when he was "this tall." Yeh. Good. Go to hell.

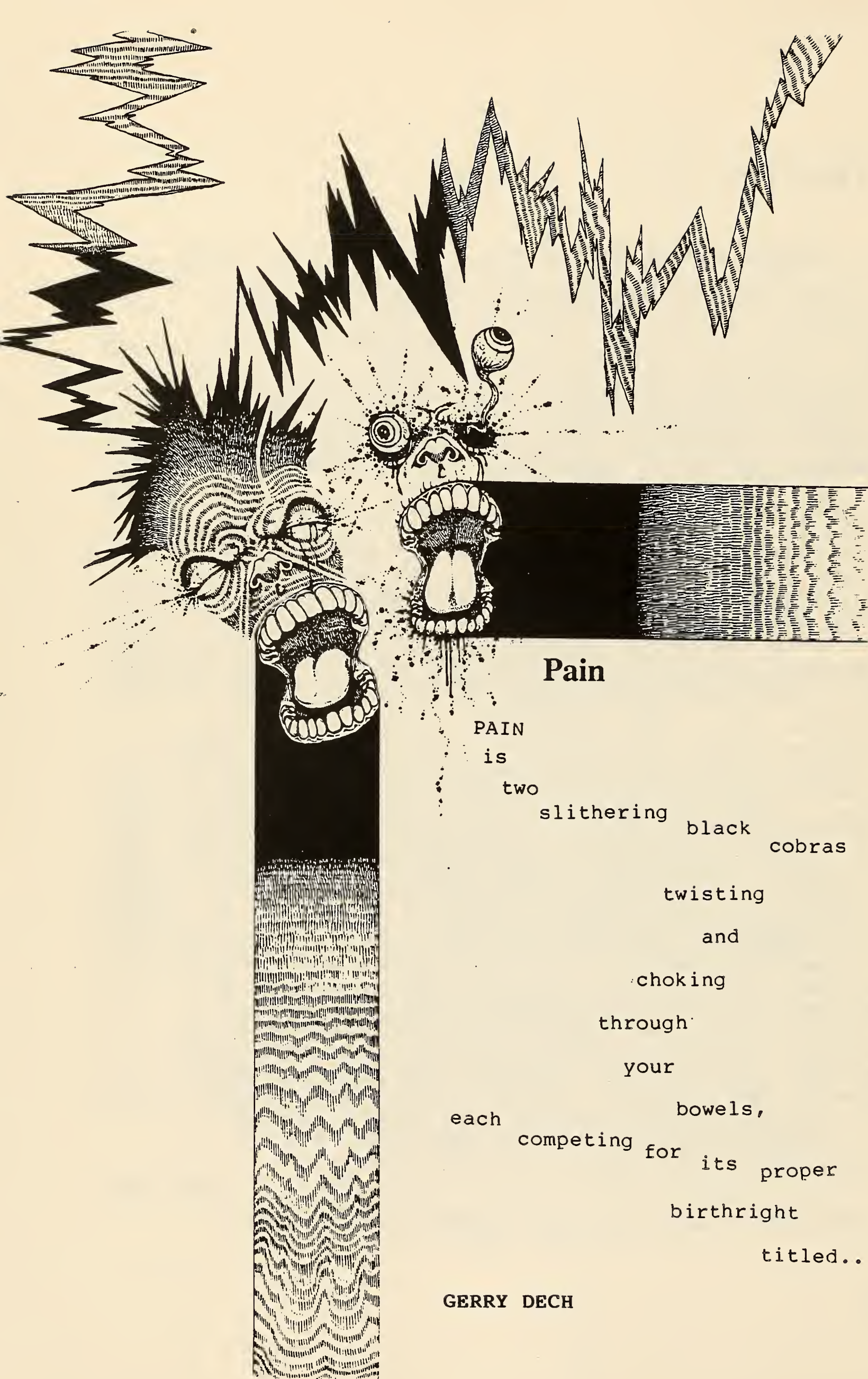
And her..."Mother." Yeh, mother my ass. I was the kid's fuckin' mother. And Father. And brother...so don't look at me through those stupid teary eyes expectin' hugs and kisses. You didn't give 'em...You don't get 'em.

Oh great...here come the looks. The dissection..."Can you believe him Harold?...T-shirt, jeans, and a leather jacket at his own brother's funeral...I tell you Harold, that's an utter disgrace"...Yeh, fuck you. Oh, wait, what's that one?..."Long haired faggot scum doesn't have enough respect to..." Yeh. You too asshole. Go to hell. ...Oh, there's a good one..."Poor, lost, fucked up kid...Can't handle the real world, so he has to..."Get your fuckin' eyes off me, bitch. Leave the scalpel at home. You don't know me and you're glad. If this wasn't my brother's funeral, you'd just as soon lock me up. ... Ah ...Fuck. ...Why do I hafta' hate so much? Goddamit, why do I hate so much? It's way too much more...and it sucks. It really sucks. ...shit. ...Yeh, well, I never said I was a fuckin' saint, now did I? I'm the first to admit I'm a shit. ... That you are man. That you are.

But you knew him. And you loved him. And you took care of him. Even when you didn't have to. And you didn't mind when he tagged along with you and your friends. And you let him know you didn't mind. And somehow, when he hugged and kissed you in public, you thought it was pretty goddam cool. And that made it easier to hug and kiss him right back. That was his talent tho', y'know? He could just make you happy. Just by bein' him. He wasn't afraid to show his feelings. He wasn't scared. He didn't have to wear a mask. Like me.

He just trusted y'know? He just loved. And for some stupid reason, he wanted to be just like me.

And I never got to tell him that I wanted to be just like him.



Pain

PAIN
is
two
slithering black cobras
twisting
and
choking
through
your
bowels,
each competing for its proper
birthright
titled...

GERRY DECH

LOVE.

The Brain Factory

Head tilted,
Hat tipped slightly so,
Arms folded,
His eloquent dialect sounded:
"We were going by the books.
That's right. Leaning forward so,
"I ruled like a King,
Entertained like a King;
I've strolled with the Sheik and the Shah
The Pope and the Queen,
And what's more, jaw protruding,
"I lived by the books
Taxed by the books.
His head held high,
I've taught by the books."

"That's right," they replied,
"You lived by the books,
Ruled our Glens and Vales by the books;
You've ruined by the books
You're blinded by the books."

And now he sits



— would you mind terribly if I
lost my mind for awhile? —

knees cradling a dangling head,

"I was going by the books."

MARY WILLIAMS

Sunday Morning

Arriving back home in the early morning hours after an evening at a show. The small talk becomes shorter, quickened, by the nervousness of anticipation, of the oncoming hours. A gentle kiss, touching softly, a whisper and a warm caress.

Lights go on and off, somewhere behind us the stairwell disappears into the shadows.

Breathing quickens, and the kisses become more passionate, almost rough, unrefined, unleashed as the animal in each of us rushes forth.

Inhaling the smell of a sweet smooth body, warm with the scents of soap along with lust, linger in the air, mixed with the scent of the burning candle.

Tongues touch, electrifying the very air around us, warm, wet, delicious desire burning, wanting to take and be taken. Running fingers through silky hair, grabbing, teasing with tongues, eyes shining brightly in the dimly lit room.

A sense like no other, being so aware of another body next to mine, feelings so intense, higher and higher the intensity builds, to a frenzy, with a shudder, pulling hair, arching backs, emotions running out of us like a river. All too quickly it is over, sinking back into the sheets, bodies lightly perspiring, cling for a moment, rapid breathing slowing, the kisses and caressing gentler.

Fingers tracing curves of the others bodies', the perspiration lingering on the faces and relaxed bodies - as the daylight creeps in the window and another Sunday morning is upon us.

J LEBLANC

Danny Alive

Once upon a midnight ponder,
I'd walk along the trees and wonder,
Of all the funny times we had
When Danny use to play.

But now there's just an empty patch,
In the field and in my mind,
In memories it haunts me
And I sit and wonder why.
I can't believe my eyes sometimes,
Forever pictured in my mind,
Were all the loving times we shared together.

The only thing that I will plea,
Is that I wished I'd never seen,
The fright of horror in my baby's eyes.
And so each day I go to him,
I talk to him and smile for him,
And brush the dirty leaves that make his bed.

Someday I'll see you Danny,
Someday we'll share our memories.
For Danny,
I've never thought of you,
As dead.

CINDY BROWN

Frozen Memories

internally

Taunt my smile

Haunt the essence

of my life force

Frozen Memories

Externally

Lie Dormant

From Foreign eyes,

Yet

Are so, so kin

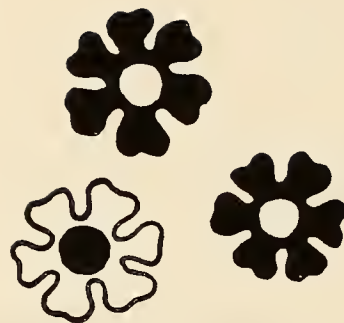
To my cold, cold touch.

Frostbite kindles

a greater warmth

in its hands.

S. WELLER



My Tomato Plants

The winter frost,
having left the
wet soil
urged me to
introduce new
tomato seeds to
my garden.
At last,
Spring had arrived.
The green sprigs
soon shot up
through the ground cover.
They were at least
ten inches tall
when,
one sunny morning,
they had all
fallen down,
and lifeless.
I soon learned
that,
a green prickly
wormy monster,
had cut the living stem
from each plant,
and completely.

FRANK GAUDET



Damaged Goods

Watch the breathing! Longer, Slower breaths; don't need to hyperventilate. Concentrate on tactile things; the white leather seat where my face is lying; the hot dry Mexican air blowing through my hair and over the rest of me; the salty tears running into my mouth. Tears? I don't feel as if I'm crying. No sobbing; just a steady stream running from my eyes. Strange... Stop the tears! Mustn't let him see the tears!

He's driving too fast, skidding around every corner. Shit! We must be doing ninety. If we roll in this convertible we're dead. Dead!!! Can't think of that right now. Got to sit up and "act normal" can't let him know I'm not on his side.

Don't you think you should slow down? You're drawing attention to us driving this fast. Besides, this is the only road between these small towns and the police will be routinely patrolling it."

"Sit back and shut up!! I'm trying to put space between us and La Paz. Do you know how far it is to the U.S. border, you dope!"

Do as he says and watch that crazy breathing. God, I feel like I'm going to explode! Light a cigarette but inhale lightly. He's right on one count. I am a dope; a dope for believing in him. For four years! Subconsciously I must have known he was crazy; but he is an educated, smooth talking bastard. A smooth talking murdering bastard!

Two years ago he was shot in Chicago. All this time I've blocked the reality gnawing in my head. He told me he went to visit relatives who lived there and some nut went wild in the street with a gun. He said that's why he came home with a bullet in his arm. I never questioned that incident because I was afraid of what I might discover about him. By letting it go as I did, I consciously believed in him. I wouldn't be remembering it now if I hadn't known the truth subconsciously. I must have blocked it out so I wouldn't have to leave him; so I wouldn't have to be "alone." I wish to Christ I was alone now, instead of 4,000 miles from home sitting next to a full blown looney who probably has me next on his list of expendable persons.

"I feel lousy. I'm going to crawl to the back seat and lie down. " At least if I'm lying down I have a chance of surviving if this car rolls off one of the curves. What am I thinking? This is a convertible. It doesn't matter which seat I'm in! Got to lie down on the floor; that way I may survive a roll. I can stretch out and brace my hands and feet from one side of the car to the other and maybe hold myself in . He doesn't seem to be noticing my rather odd psychotic position; too preoccupied. Got to get that image out of my haed! Thinking about it will make me as demented as he. That poor Mexican bastard didn't stand a chance though; unarmed. I never knew my man was armed until I heard the shot and turned around . Wish I hadn't turned around; I 'll never get that sight out of my head now. Probably will never live long enough to be the same anyhow. Damaged goods; because of some stupid thing he did. Yup, that's me from now on; just "damaged goods".

WENDY WELDON



The Clincher

You walk through the door
with eyes puffy and sore.

I've seen all I want;
you insist I know more.

You say you've been dancin',
but quite innocently,
As each partner you danced with
you told her of me.

I'm movin' on now,
quite intact and alive;

I've not been that stupid
since the ripe age of five

WENDY WELDON



I jumped
over the wire fence,
into
the wide open
green pasture.
I looked for the
beautiful
yellow shiny cowslips
showing their grand colors
in the lush meadow.
They weren't alone,
and neither was I
for,
unknown to me,
a few yards
beyond,
a 700 pound
black and white
young playful cow
wanted to test
his play skills
and,
chased me
back
over
the wire fence,
and, in a hurry.

FRANK GAUDET

My Room

The dark quiet of my room gives me time to reflect, to travel back to another dark, quiet room in my past, to a darkly quiet moment in my life.

To a second floor apartment bedroom in New Orleans, Louisiana. A fifteen year old me, in bed, awake, waiting for... what always comes at night. But wait is all I seem to do in the black silence. Nothing sounds except my heart tonight. Thank God. Slowly, my rigid body melts into the covers. No words, no noise emits from my mother's and Karl's room. Perhaps tonight the only visitor I have will be sleep. I turn on my side and curl up, smiling, as I realize this is probably the same position my unborn sister is in. I close my eyes and let that be my last conscious thought.

"Rotten bitch! Yo cheetin' on me agin!" Slam! I awoke to the sound of my mother's body being thrown against her bedroom wall. I could feel my room vibrate from the impact of bones and wood.

"No, Karl! There's no one! How many times have I got to tell --"

"Shut up, slut!" Bang! I could almost feel the punch myself, see my mother crouching on the floor, trying vainly to protect the small life inside her. I closed my eyes in the all too bright darkness.

"Yo nothin' but ah lyin' greedy whore!" Crack! I could hear the clothes rip off their hangers and race my mother to the floor as Karl threw her into the closet. I covered my ears, squinched my eyes shut, tried to cover my entire body with my blankets. Tried to cover me so that, maybe, the sounds would pass over, leaving me unentered in vacuum silence. But sound holds no partiality to the young, and my violent world descended around me, through me.

"Darryl! Get up yo filthy bitch!" Karl's slippered feet dragged as he swayed across the room toward the lump on the closet floor. Only, his swaying wasn't just from his alcohol and drugs.

"Darryl, Darryl, why yo makin' me do this?"

I sat up. The cascading sweat on my goose-bumped flesh froze instantly. That voice. Karl's, but not Karl's. There was compassion, confusion, in that voice...and something else. The tone behind...I began to shake and my mouth moved without words. My God! Now I understood why my mother referred to Karl as "Ralph" when she talked about him in his violent periods. Karl has a multiple personality! He's crazy! But, which one of him is crazy? Which one, the violent or subdued Karl, is the real Karl? I slipped back down in to my bed and crawled deeply into its covers, trying to warm my frozen soul.

"Darryl, why yo runnin'? Darryl yo tramp, don't yo run from me woman!" Meshed footsteps raced down the hall and my bedroom door was whacked open.

"Tracey!" my mother half screamed as she flicked on the light, "Get up, pack, we're leaving!" She stood, shaking, in the middle of my room, her face sticky with sweat and tears. She held her stomach with both hands, as if to keep the life inside her warm, untouched. God, she's much too thin for five months pregnant!

"Naw, yo not goin' anywhere," Karl slurred as he turned off my light and disjointly strutted back down the hall.

"Bastard!" my mother shrieked as she went to my brother's room. I followed, like a shadow, a ghost in someone else's graphic play.

My thirteen year old brother Jerry was up when I entered his room. His face was dead confusion, an image of mine. We looked at each other, two questions with no answers.

"Oh, Tracey," my mother whispered. The tears clogged her voice as well as her sight. She hugged her middle, as if to physically restrain her baby's birth for four more months.

"What Ma? What is it?"

"He kicked me, he kicked me," my mother's eyes darted, unable to focus. Her skin jumped as she took my hand from her arm and laid it on her stomach. "Here."

I can't feel. My mother is beaten. My sister abused before her birth. Oh, little sister, don't make it. Don't be born to be beaten. Die if you can. If only I could too.

My mothers strangled breathing soaked the air as I trudged back to my room. Karl was quiet, no doubt asleep. I knew not to pack. My mother wouldn't leave. Jerry wouldn't sleep. I laid down on my bed, mechanically surviving. An android pretending it feels.

TRESSA LEE BREEN

Oedepus

She lays at the foot of your high-towered buildings
crying,
bleeding,
dying.

You continue to rape her
over
and over
and over.

And she withers.
And she begs.
And still your lust is not quenched.
You grope.
You grab.
You rip.
You tear.
You take

even the last droplets of her milk
which is laced with the toxemia you
have induced in her.

Wasn't she who your ancestors called "Mother?"

And God.
Your Father.
Do you think he is dead because you have ignored him?

PEGGY MARCOUX

Spring in Paris - 1987

Overheard at a Sidewalk Cafe. Lovers at an umbrella table, holding hands and looking into each others eyes only as lovers know how. Audibly he whispers to her, "How shall I put it? There must be words which describe you and me,... us. Er...

Chemistry?
Too harsh.

Energy?
Too forceful.

Electricity?
Too powerful.

Rather, we're like spun
radiant threads of
cosmic dust;

Ephemerally

soft,
gentle,
tender;

moving,
bending,
weaving,
entwining,
free-flowing,
drifting;

Constantly

reaching out,
catching,
embracing,
hugging...and
kissing...and
loving."

She leaned over...and kissed his lips.

JOSEPH A. KLEJNA

Going Home

I went into her room, which was dimly lit and quiet ...that is ...quiet except for the constant beep-beep-beep coming from one of the machines that was placed at the head of her bed.

I walked over to her side and clutched her hand in mine and gave it a loving squeeze. I noticed she was getting cold, so I pulled up the blanket to cover her more securely. She opened her eyes and smiled as she said: "I wanna go home." To which, I answered softly: "pretty soon...pretty soon."

A drop of water fell to rest itself on her hand, and I brushed it away and kissed her hand where the tear had fallen. Once again, a little louder "I wanna go home," and again "I wanna go home". I also repeated my answer: "pretty soon...very soon."

That constant beep-beep-beep was beginning to unnerve me by now, and as she closed her eyes once more, I left the room.

It seemed an eternity before I was allowed to return to her side to find that she was lying peacefully...almost like

a child. But there was something missing. I heard no beep-beep-beep. What happened to the machine?...was it broken?...Did someone turn it off by accident?...where is the beep-beep-beep? I want to hear the beep-beep-beep!

Her hand was still cold, so I reached again for the blanket, but then I realized that the cold would no longer bother her, because my mother had gotten her wish. My mother had gone home.

GEORGE NYMAN

I do

Do you remember our first slow dance
Or maybe the night Tigsy's parent went away
or even the time I snuck in your bedroom
window late one Saturday night...?

I do

Did you know how much I needed you
or that you were the fantasy girl I dreamed about
or how much I truly loved you...?

I do

Do you believe in dreams coming true
or love lasting forever
or maybe, me finding you again...?

I do

Your Eyes

I looked into your eyes, as I once did.
The lights hit your pupils just right.
Inside I could see a spark which was turning into a
lightning bolt.

I could see a sky of gray clouds in the background.
They were darker than usual and I could hear the thunder in
your voice.
The rain started to fall.
All too quickly I came back to reality.
The rain was just the tears that were rolling down your
cheeks.

All as I looked into your eyes.

GRANT MALONEY

Let the Games Begin

I love that smell, it's warm, moist and surrounded with
lively sounds. The sun isn't shining, puddles fill the
streets and walkways, and yet a feeling of buoyancy fills my
stomach. Everything is gray but the air feels good in your
lungs.

A sense of my childhood permeates the air. The
neighborhood exhibition games have begun. Remember? The
kind of day when you came home late for dinner because you
were battling last year's home team? And your mother didn't
get mad when she saw how black your white ankle socks had
become. It's the kind of day that takes the fluorescence
out of those new white basketball sneakers. And it's
finally warm enough to put that old winter coat into storage
and break out that old windbreaker. The one that's been on
so many adventures. Remember, the Congo with Tarzan, side
by side with Jessie James at the Alamo fighting the
Redcoats, helping NASA to put my sister's favorite doll on
Saturn, and how anyone can forget the time we were allied
with Sargent Rock to kill all those Germans, assorted
evildoers and miscellaneous badguys.

Yes, it's that time of year, again!

GRANT MALONEY

Thoughts in Time

The other day I went out and stood on our new sun deck. We had just put it in the weekend before the surprise snowstorm, so I hadn't had the chance to get out there. I stood there, smoking a cigarette, and my mind began to wander....

I saw myself playing in the dirt with my match box cars, and swinging on the oak tree by the brook, and I watched myself run through the woods with reckless abandon. I had to laugh at that little hellion, he just wasn't aware of all the difficulties that awaited him in the future. He was happy. He was carefree. He was innocent.

Suddenly, he spotted me. He stood, transfixed on the vision of his older self. He wasn't afraid, just sort of cautiously curious. I gestured for him to come over, he hesitated at first, but gingerly he crept over.

"How you doing Billy?" I asked.

"O.K.", he answered flatly.

"You having A good time?"

"Yes."

"You know who I am?" I questioned.

"Yes. I'm not afraid ya' know.", he said boldly.

I smiled and said, "I know you're not Billy."

"Am I always gonna be bad?" he asked in a hollow tone. The question pierced through me, stinging my very soul.

"You're not bad Billy," I answered shakily, "you're just a little different. You mean well, but things sometimes come out different than you'd hoped."

"Well, can't you do anything to change things?" he asked.

"I can try."

With this I tilted my head back and inhaled my smoke deeply. When I looked back little Billy was gone. Gone was his happiness, his simplicity, and all his splendid innocence.

I finished my cigarette, still gazing at the old oak tree. The swing had rotted, and fell down. My eyes peered, hoping to catch another glimpse of little Billy playing, but he was gone.

BILL PONUSKY

Harsh Reality

Driven by fear, the rabbit runs--as the spotted, lithe leopard's teeth gnar, dripping salivated desire for prey. Driven by hunger, sprinting, dust swirling, violently obscuring vision, rabbit flounders, then regains little feet, dancing, teasing, petrified, no bushes to seclude, to elude. Omnipresent field, arid...no place to hide. Driven by life force, leopard and rabbit, human and life. Ivory knives flash, clamp down, the rabbit is ousted, the blood on the body of the Grim Reaper. Give and take, life and death--onward and forever.

Lesley Ann

You are beautiful,
so reluctant to learn,
so curious to see....
Your wonder for life
helps me to look at things
too, but more carefully
than before....
You are a perfect replica
of me when I was small,
people say you could pass
as my daughter....
You and I walk and talk
together in rhythm,
sometimes I find myself
babbling as you do....
You are so small and fragile
but have brought so much
happiness and laughter
to my life....

DARCI PETERSON

Hell ? I've Been There

It was a roaster of a day; no clouds, and worst of all, no shade. I was in a place called Big Springs Nebraska and had driven straight through from Mass. with no sleep.

Up ahead I could see a sign next to a road that forked to the right. As I neared I slowed the car and read the sign. ORIGINAL SOD HUT 2MI I drove on past, then reconsidered and turned around. I needed sleep. There had been no sign of civilization, except passing cars, for the last hour or so. I figured if the place wasn't crowded I might get some rest in the shade of the hut.

When I pulled up I was elated. No people! It wasn't a tourist trap; at least not any longer. The grass had grown as high as my waist and the fence surrounding the place had fallen.

After parking the car, I ran through the tall grass toward the shelter of the hut. It seemed solid enough. The four walls were standing straight and the roof was still intact. I stuck my head in to see what the interior was like and felt a coolness hit my face. It was a one-room hut with dirt floor and no windows.

Inside I went, walking to the center of the room. The temperature was at least 15 degrees cooler than it was on the outside. I was about to sit on the floor when I heard a faint rustling sound. The room was dark as there were no windows, just the light coming through the open doorway. I froze and listened. I heard it again. The sound was foreign to me. I had never heard anything like it. It was not windy out-side, and besides, what I was hearing definately sounded inside.

My eyes were beginning to adjust to the faint light. From the corner of my eye I caught a movement of some sort on the far right wall. I stared until the object moved again and came into focus. A snake! A huge snake; about as big around as my forearm. Okay; I knew where he was, but did he have relatives?

By this time my eyes had become totally acclimated to the hut's interior. Each corner held a cluster of snakes. None were in the middle where I stood. I forced myself to look at the walls. I caught my breath in horror! The hut was filled with holes and snakes were intertwined in those holes and writhing through each other causing the rustling sound. I looked up, toward the ceiling; same story. A couple of the gastly creatures were writhing and danglling downward.

I've never been afraid of snakes; I mean one small snake at a time. This was different. Large snakes are very, very impressive at eye level and in huge quantities. To me there seemed to be hundreds. In reality, there could have been as few as fifty or sixty. They were everywhere and they were beginning to notice they had an intruder. The snakes in the corners were starting, very slowly, just two or three from each group, to advance. I realized they weren't rattlers, as they made no such sound, and were much too large. But were they of a poisonous variety? I knew nothing of Nebraska snakes.

The terror felt was complete; but I had to make a move. One of the snakes from the ceiling came flopping down about two yards behind me with a thud. I didn't jump; I couldn't. I had to keep my cool. Taking a deep breath, I slowly advanced to the door, each of my steps agitating and stirring up the inhabitants of the hut even more. As I neared the only door, one large snake from above the outside door dangled its head about three feet from me. I knew the time was now or never. I ducked under him and started running threw the grass. A thought stopped me dead, as if I'd run into a wall. If there were that many inside, I must be walking on them out here. Sure enough, I scanned the immediate area, in which I stood, and spotted quite a few

more. I took a few deep breaths and slowly inched my way to the pavement, managing to avoid them. Safe at last, I started into the grass. Bull snakes! Thank God. They are the species that fight and eat the rattlers.

I was sweating, shaking, and by now crying; realizing it was over and I could fall apart in safety. I turned toward my car and screamed! I had forgotten to shut the car door.

WENDY WELDON



— would you mind terribly if I
lost my mind for a while? —



Zero Writing

When I was a little children, I walked upon a path I picked, proudly pondering without vocabulary. Upon the path a pickled person I spoke of refuse and desertion. I tried to speak back but like I said, I had no vocabulary. So I looked and acted smart. He picked up on my lack of diction and with that note, handed me a Webster's Nonfiction.

He then said, fear not, my son, if you can't speak there will be no glimpse of derogatory condensation on my part. (This guy is a real square.) Nevertheless, I ripped the dictionary from my pocket to absorb his word but with my own mind to lock it. I could spell. It's funny, even though I could spell I couldn't put words together in complete sentences. Which is different but so isn't this fable. I can motion your mind with the words on the table. As you read with delight and I hope that you might just forget about TV and cable. This is what I call zero writing, you start with a thought and you end up in space. You stop when you're caught and you land on your face. You start nowhere and you end up nowhere, though things have been said you can think of in bed.

DAVID VALLIERE

I Will Not Live

I will not live
Where I cannot Strike the flint
And Spark hope to life
Urging it with warm breath
To consume my soul
And eat up my despair,
I will not dream
Where but one tear
Has the power to smother out
The Spark,
And I cannot breathe
In a world
Which makes no room
For hope.
I may yet die
But it will be with
Hope in my heart
And upon my tongue.



HOLLY YOUNG

Promises

I promise you my love without any limits
to accept the things you believe in
and to always try to understand you;

to be near, whenever you need my presence
to trust in your love for me
and pray that it grows stronger everyday.

to watch our love grow
together, through the years.

I promise to soothe your mind and body
to plan with you
to dream with you
to do my best to show you how much I love you

For you have become my world
my future
my wife

the future is ours

always

THE EMERALD

He, emerges on my world

as someone new

Renovates grass, and sticks and stones

To something grand-

And I, looking on this

Am almost the stranger here-

I whisper to myself in silent prayer-

Please God, let's be gentle with

My child.

MARY B. WILLIAMS





-4 Dec-87-